Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0889AZ-1 for Amphitheater Unified School District, #10

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As evidence the applicant's vision is designed to align the district with an Amphitheater Custom Education Model which will create a personalized learning environment that will address student learning needs on data and and college career readiness. By providing students with personalized learning skills, this learning opportunity will deepen learning, accelerate student achievement and increae equity in student achieve. The applicant's approach is evidenced by implementing a teacher and administrator evaluation system which will provide highly and qualified teachers. Today's classroom must have highly and qualified teachers. The plan also calls for technology and blended learning to improve outcomes. Without technology in the modern day classroom, the children will be lost. blending learning provides opportunities for students to deepen their learning through their learning in areas of interest, accelerating learniing and improving their skills. Also included in the plan is professional development. Through professional development, the learning needs of students can be differentiated. In the plan ccollege and career readiness will be an area of focus. Through this effort, the district is preparing the students for th 21st Century. Finally, the plan calls for data system which will drive instruction. As evidence the district is accelerating student learning through means of finding highly qualified teacher, integrating technology, providing professional development, using data to guide instruction to prepare students for the college and career track.

Weaknesses: No evidence of increasing equity. Does not address truning around the low performing school.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As evidence the applicant;s slection process was to target group of low socioeconomic student (SES) those eligible for free/reduced lunch in all schools. The district's total population is over 14,000. they chose grades 3-12 due to the weaknesses in Math throughtout the district. A total of 19 schools will be participants with a population of 5,851. The district's demographics show high percentage of free and reduced lunch, however, the district wide free/reduced lunch rate is 48.04%. The ELL learners ranged from 0.5% - 25.2%, Special Education learners ranged from 9% - 24.7%; and Free/Reduced Lunch 12%-100% within the 19 schools participating. Two schools in the grant Free/Reduced Lunch was at 100%. The planned approach to implementation is in direct guidelines with the vision.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant designed a high quality plan which entails a need for professional, expansion of the student database, purchasing and utilizing as student tracker which will enable the district to identify those students that are enrolled in college, scaling up the technology infrastructure and implementing project-based learning and providing a targeted personalized learning environment for all student. In the plan, the 5851 will receive interventions based on their academics needs. Also teachers will receive professional development on blended learning, differentiated instruction, project based learning, career and college readiness, alignment with the Arizona Core standards and technology use. The plan will also consist of creating a personalized learning environment. The plan will have 4 phases which includes project startup, implementation of the model, full implementation of blended learning and a comprehensive evaluation.

The applicant outlines two goals which involves improving student achievement in Mathematics and Science between low SES and non low SES. The growth of gain is proposed at 1.5%. A list of objectives, activities, person responsible, and timetables are included. The second goal is 100% of Students will be college and career ready. A list of objectives, activities, person responsible, and timetables are included. Both goals are aligned with carrying out the plan.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

As indicated by the applicant, the emphasis is on grades 3-12 in the area of mathematics and grades 4 and 8-10 in science which indicates area of need and support. The summative assessment used is ESEA assessment or end-of-course test. Grades 3-8 and 10 uses the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) or the replacement State test. Grades 3-9 uses North West Evaluation Association-Measure of Academic Progress NWEA-MAP. The applicant proposed the growth rate at 1.5%. As indicated by the applicant decreasing the gaps in Science and Math for students in grade 3-12. As indicated by the anticipated gap decrease will be proposed at 3% each year. The applicant presented baseline data and the increase on summative assessments and the decrease in gaps among subgroups in Science and Math are adequate in terms of baseline data.

Graduation rated shows a steady increase. The applicant proposed the graduation rate at a 1% increase. College enrollment is calculated as the ratio between college enrolled students and their graduating cohorts.

College enrollment SY 2010 -2011 =Number of SY 2008-2009 graduated enrolled in a higher education dluring the 16 months of graduation.

College enrollment rate = College enrollment SY2010 + Cohort Population

There is no baseline data calculated for college enrollment. the information included in the chart are self-reported statistics from graduating seniors who indicated that they were enrolling in a two or four year college or university. As evidence the applicant plan to purchase a student tracking service to provide adequate data for program improvements.

Weakness The data for college enrollment is self reported and there is no baseline data included. No evidence of closing gap. No evidence of increase in enrollment.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates ways of improving learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps. As evidence the applicant indicates in the narrative student achievement results increased for special education, low SES, and ELL students. There is a system wherein an intervention team works with schools that does not make adequate progress and reviews data with the principal, set goals, and provides continued monitoring and feedback.

The district received a grant Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) which allowed them to purchase Project EXCELL. The program was a supplemental resource for the classrrom. The focus was composite improvemnts in student achievement in the classroom at the school level. Classroom assessment was identified as a priority by district leadership. After implementing a plan, the applicant indicates that EXCELL helped in student achievement.

The district makes student performance data available to students, educators and parents to inform and improve participation, instruction and services. Through the school information system, teachers have ready access to student data. The system has the Amphi Data Book which data on student achievement by school, enrollment and demographic information, changes in attendance patters, graduation and dropout rates, etc. Teachers are able to generate reports. Parents have access to their own childilsdata through the parent portal.

Weaknesses: There is no data presented to indicated to that there is a clear track record of success enhancing student achievement.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has a plan that is committed to a high level of transparency. The website contains annual financial reports, average

teacher salary, and the salary schedule for teacher and support staff, budget information, and school performance. Also on the website, Amphi Facts page contains the average total cost of educating one student, budget figures, and information about teacher salaries. All school budgets are available from the Finance office and from each school principal.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is projecting a Blended Learning Project. This plan has already been approved by the Arizona Department of Education. The blended learning project is designed to support intervention instruction. Then the district plan to develop and pilot "transformative school models to achieve gains in student achievement. This model will also incorporate the college and career readiness framework. The applicant's motive is to use the framework for the state's RTTD grant along with the grant already in place and extend the Blended Learning Project. This plan is in line with the implementation guidelines and procedures.

Weaknesses: No evidence that the district has autonomy. No clear clarification about the autonomy.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents meaningful stakeholder engagement and support for this projects. Meetings were held to get stakeholders input and suggestions for improving students' achievement through a personalized learning environment. Stakeholders used a brainstorming strategy to prioritize and the direction of the grant was determined. As evidence, the Governor, President of the Amphitheater Education Association as well as the State Director of Education. The Amphi foundation and Family School Partnership are non profit organizations that support the efforts of the applicant. The community, teachers and parents. Each school community in the proposal has been involved in identifying site priority areas and student needs. There is a true indication that the stakeholders are a buy in to the project.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high quality plan for implementing personalized learning environment. First, the needs were identified. This was done by having meetings with stakeholders from the perspective of teachers, administrators, parents, community. The needs were then prioritized. The data was reviewed on the NWEA, MAP, Stanford 10, and Arizonal Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). After reviewing data, the decision was to target students eligible for free and reduced lunch due to the gap between that group and non-eligible group. Then they looked at scores and found the weaknesses across the board. The next step was to come up with a plan. The results indicated that those low performing student in math and science needed help. As a result the district proposed a plan which included personalizing learning. This strategy will prepare students for college and career readiness.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As evidence, the applicant's plan for improving student achievement by personalizing learning is based on the need of the individual child. Once the need is identified the child is provided with clearly identified strategies and interventions to allow comprehension. As evidence the student database will include college and career readiness checklist information, student achievement data and progress report. Thus incorporating Blended Learning in the curriculum empowers the student. Blending learning allows the student to take ownership in their learning and become more effective self-directed learners. The plan allows the student to keep track of their progress through web-based curriculum. Parents meet with the students and counselor to develop and review and career-ready goals and plans and help the student and the family make best choices possible for their future.

The plan allows for students to broaden their knowledge and experience by exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen learning. As evidence through the use of technology students learn from other students

around the world as well as within their won classroom. For example, as a science project, students may decide to study weather patterns and decide to connect with students around the world. Within the classroom, different perspectives are shared through cooperative learning environments.

It is evidence that data from the assessments will be used to determine successful completion of student achievement goals and providing feedback on an ongoing basis through classroom observation followed by conferences to ensure progress toward goals.

Weaknesses: List of programs did not provide specifics. Not clear about how to help high need students. No timetables or deliverables indicated.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a plan to improve teaching and learning by personalizing the learning environment. As evidence, the plan analyzes student data and tailor the instruction to the needs and abilities of the student. For example, the information recieved from the data base will allow teachers to base their instruction on the strategies to teach those skills where the students are having problems. The plan allows students to set objectives related to their achievement and performance. Also the plan allows the teacher to better determine what interventions are needed in academic instruction by accessing data.

The plan has designed a comprehensive professional development that allows teachers to be trained to meet the needs of the students as well as how to effectively use web-based or instructional management system to enhance learning. Through personalized learning environment, strategies for differentiated instruction, and incorporating the Arizona Common Core and career and college-readiness skills into the will require professional development. The use of instructional coaches will help teachers with best practices in content areas.

Progress towards meeting college and career ready standards will be monitored by the teachers and counselors. Some of the benchmarks geared towards college and career readinedd include passing courses, meeting state standards, completing college applications and FAFSA, taking advance course, taking and passing the PSAT, SAT, and ACT. Counselors will work closely with the students to adhere to the proceduress.

Weaknesses: Not clear about data implementation. Does not provide data about the program.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As evidence, the central office supports the personalized learning environment component to provide support and services to all. School leadership teams provide resources and instructional practices. For example, a variety of web-based programming may be incorporated into the instruction that allows for meeting individual student needs. In additional, the Department of Special Education and Language Acquisition and Cultural Development can provide support for the special needs.

Weaknesses: Does not provide evidence to demonstrate mastery. Does not provide learning resources and instructional to include ELL. Does not provide school leadership teams with flexibility and autonomy.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

D.2

The district and infrastructure supports a personalized learning environment that will provide every student the support and resources needed. Resources and instructional practices in the districts are cited to be adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners. This is supported by the fact that partnerships with vendors will provide equal access to programming and technology for students. Online support for web-based program will be available to trouble shoot equipment problems. Appropriate staffing provides assistance at the building-level to support the implementation plan (i.e., instructional coaches/ technology coaches). For example, both instructional and technology coaches will be used to provide professional development to teachers and staff, as well as, provide resources to students and parents.

The information technology system will allow for students and parents to access from home

Weakenesses: No timelines and targets. No evidence that LEA will ensure that all students have access to resources and instructional practices. No specifics about the infrastructure.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**8**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A rigorous continuous improvement management system process evaluation that will ensure that services are meeting the needs of the school communities served. Timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the grant by data made available online and feedback from the data analyst. Monthly progress will be monitored by the project director and the data analyst. At the school level, the principal and site team will meet quarterly. The teachers will monitor student progress through review of student work, benchmark testing, and reports on the computer software system. Instructional coaches will work with teachers to design programs to address the students' individual needs. As evidence, timely and regulary feedback on progress is a vital entity to students' success.

Weaknesses: Plan did not include the input of parents and community members. Deliverables were in the form of reports.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

During the grant cycle, it is important to have strategies to support a comprehensive ongoing and engaging communication system. This is evidenced in the applicant's response through web page, school electronic newsletter, senior staff team meeting, principal collaborative meeting, design team groups, parent portal, and professional learning communities. This is evidenced in the applicant's response by holding monthly meetings to discuss issues and concerns at the school and staff levels.The district website is regularly used to inform the community of events and activities throughout the district. The system will also promote and utilize social media as a means to engage students, parents and the community with updates and announcements concerning students' progress and achievement. The ability of members of this consortium to promote and foster community and school relationships will be vital to ensure the success and achievement of the goals which have been established in this reform vision, as establishing clear lines of communication among all stakeholders will enhance and promote a culture that will value education and post-secondary training. Additionally, the use of websites will also enhance communication efforts with stakeholders.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant selected performance measures that provided annual targets. As evidence the goals outlines performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. In specifying performance measures, the applicant indicated tthe performance measures were selected after reviewing the data and aligning with the district's vision and goals hat. the science and math are two areas where there are demands for jobs. The targets for each year will be utilized for planning and performance management for the RTTT reform efforts from each level of implementation - district to school to classroom. Additionally, each measure is also set and identified by each subgroup of students (race/ethnicity, poverty, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners). Measures that are described by the applicant are critical to making every student outcome visible and holding schools accountable for those outcomes. They are actionable at the school level meaning that school leaders, teachers and staff can use them to make changes that will have demonstrated impact.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outs a focused plan to evaluate the effectiveness of it investments. Current and future evaluation initiatives are specified that allow for continuous improvement and adjustment of the reform plan. For example, immediate evaluation of the success of individualized instruction will occur with the increased frequency and diversity of design within formative assessments. In the future participation in Tennessee the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career consortium will help ensure appropriate access and use of performance based measuring tools. Key elements of the applicant's efforts are consistent and an allow timely monitoring and reporting of activities involved with the overall project and communication to governing and key stakeholders. Specific strategies of evaluation will include the following:

- comparison of achievement and growth targets on both formative and summative data;
- teacher-made rubrics for performance and demonstration to evaluate the effectiveness of reform instruction; and
- intensive monitoring of extended day participants against control group to measure growth;
- records of professional development sessions (e.g. reports of hours & effectiveness ratings, etc.); and
- surveys of all stakeholders.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget outlines measures to sustain project goals. The Consortium has developed a strategy that will rely on intensive training for teachers and leaders at initial implementation and grow steadily more independent as training continues. This plan allows for staffing instructional and technical coaching positions with teachers-on- assignment (independent contractors) initially. Their roles will be as intense support for teachers as the transformation from traditional teaching strategies to one of prescribed learning for students. Consortium districts have pledged to review each position and each program in light of success generated by results at the end of the final grant year. When the initial technology requirements and career academy equipment are in place, they commit to the ongoing maintenance and upgrades associated with maintaining these investments commensurate with need. Supporting the training on reformed instructional strategies and new technology for new personnel will be incorporated into the districts' existing efforts to ensure that all personnel are knowledgeable and up-to-date with expectations. The most likely factor in the continuation of this program is its success. The key to creating sustainability is to start planning for it at the very beginning, as demonstrated by applicant actions referenced above.

Weaknesses: Lacking specifics on investments. No contingency plan about the computers. Ongoing operational costs.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As evidence the district has financial support from both the State and their local government. The district has ongoing professional development and teacher and administrative evaluation program already in place. In addition, the Amphi Foundation offers matching funds and technology to support their iniative. As evidence the district will continue using M and O funds to fund the teachers. As stated the federal funds will be used support any additional needed professional development. This paln is justifiable for the goals of the project and the term of the grant.

No backup plan details about financial support

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority

The applicant has presented a reform initiative that will build on the core educational assurance areas as a personalized learning environment is implemented. The initiative uses collaborative, data-based strategies ad 21st century tools such as online learning platforms, computers, and learning strategies to deliver instruction and supports tailored to the needs and goals of students, with the aim of enabling all students to graduate college- and career-ready.

Weaknesses: No goals, timelines or deliverables. Continue to rely on Ampi Foundation.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addressed the process of implementing personalized learning environments. As evidence the applicant a personalized sequence of instructionaal content and skill development will be developed to help each student achieve his or her individual learning goals. Support will be provided for teachers to differentiate instruction to so that they can effectively personalize the learning environment to benefit each child in th class. Professional development will be provided support teachers on Career and College-Readiness skills needed and how to incorporate them in instruction,

Total	210	147

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0889AZ-3 for Amphitheater Unified School District, #10

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence that it intends to have a comprehensive plan and presents a credible approach to the goals of personalized student learning. In particular, the applicant is committed to have performance-based evaluations in place and using student data (i.e., the Tyler student information system) to improve instruction. Furthermore, the applicant addresses core educational assurance areas by (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students for college and career-ready; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and inform stakeholders; and (3) recruiting and retaining effective teachers. However, the narrative is not clear about the fourth assurance area of turning around lowest-achieving schools. The information about addressing that need is insufficient. Additionally, the applicant is unclear about how to share student data (while complying with FERPA) with multiple stakeholders in education. When the student data is meant to be used for improving instruction, the analysis and reflection on the data benefit from research/analysis by educators and

researchers from IHEs, but the applicant is unclear about who has access to student performance data in addition to "the teacher, parent, counselor, and principal".

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents strong evidence that it performed a thoughtful process of identifying participating students and specifying school demographics, grade bands, and subject areas (math and science). The applicant includes all schools to participate in the RTT-D project, but it articulate well on why the project plans to focus on the target groups in all participating schools. The description of the process to select students in participating schools provides a strong case that not only meets the competition's eligibility requirements but also supports the application's goal to address students in need of academic support and opportunities.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents strong evidence that it has a high-quality plan to implement the RTT-D reform proposal. The narrative demonstrates the applicant's commitment to increase teacher quality by providing them with practical PD opportunities. The applicant provides a working model of three phases of the district-wide change, and each phase involves specific goals and appropriate experts (e.g., counselors, data analysis, instructional coaches, etc.) as part of the team. However, the narrative is not clear about the process of defining skills and knowledge of data analysts/instructional coaches especially when the data-driven efforts to improve instruction is the key ingredient of the successful implementation of the RTT-D proposal. Similarly, the applicant plans to provide PDs to improve instruction, but the information regarding whom it partners with to design and implement the PDs, how the applicant plans to share student data to inform the PD designers, and other relevant details about the PD process are insufficient.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides clear and strong evidence that its plan is ambitious yet achievable goals. Although the applicant does not address various student subgroups, it is understandable since the target students in the participating schools are the students with low SES as stated in the vision. It is noticeable that the applicant proposes three clear goals addressing student achievement, college/career ready, and effective teachers. It follows up on the goals by providing ambitious yet achievable quantitative target goals each year during the RTT-D implementation. However, the narrative is unclear about the goals for the subgroups regarding Graduation rates and College enrollment rates. Additionally, the target goals in Graduation rates are not consistent, and the rational for setting an incremental target each year by schools/baseline data is not provided clearly.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates limited evidence that it has a clear track record of success. It is noticeable that Project EXCELL! resulted in increasing student achievement and improvements in teacher recruitment and retention. However, the data about the increased student achievement is limited to survey ratings. Although the applicant mentions that a value-added analysis of student achievement was developed by its research department, and that its analysis showed student learning improved in most areas district-wide, the information is insufficient in that the data does not specify the success in the past four years, raw student data and other quantitative evidence to support the record of success. The applicant does provide data on hard-to-fill positions and how the TIF grant addressed the teacher recruitment/retention problem successfully since year 2007. However, the evidence about improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps is lacking in the narrative. The applicant states that it has (1) an intervention team in response to low-performing schools and (2) a student information system, the Amphi Data Book that allows student performance data available to students, parents, and teachers. However, the narrative is not clear about how it actually implemented the reform to turn around the low-performing schools and provides little information about the outcomes of the reform. Additionally, the narrative about the applicant's data system is not clear about the ways student performance data inform and improve instruction and services especially about how the plan involves educators who can support teachers in use of student performance data.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that it has transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. Its annual financial reports include the salary schedule for teachers and support staff and budget information. However, it is not clear whether the salary schedule actually specifies actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances and actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff/teachers.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence that there are successfully conditions (i.e., ARS 15-701, ECAP, and State Superintendent's support) for the applicant to implement a blended learning model as well as relevant RTT-D reform efforts in line with the State's Race to the Top grant. However, the narrative is not explicit about the realities and ideals about sufficient autonomy to be able to successfully implement the personalized learning environments in the proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates strong evidence that it has meaningful stakeholder engagement and support in the development of the program. The narrative provides a clear description of how teachers, administration, and family/community members were engaged in the development of the proposal. The applicant provides letters of support from stakeholders including (1) signed letters from two mayors and the state director of education and (2) singed assurance from the president of the teacher association as well as the school board president. The applicant states that there were no revisions after the development of the plan, but that all the input and various perspectives were considered to create agreement on the plan. It is not clear whether the 10-day State/Mayor comment period was enforced.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses the applicant's current status in implementing the RTT-D reforms including identified needs. It is clear that its analysis considered multiple data sources including test data, evaluation TIF reports, and its policy documents. However, the analysis is limited to identifying needs and gaps only, and the logic connecting the achievement gaps in the applicant's district, its weakness math/science performance, and its weakness in assessing student performance is not clearly articulated.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence that it has a plan for improving learning that intends to engage and empowers all learners. The applicant also demonstrates evidence that its plan allows students to (1) have opportunities to understand that learning is a key to success, (2) have personalized learning aligned with college and career-ready standards; and (3) have access to diversity and learn to develop human traits, such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. For example, the applicant presents a strong idea that the use of technology in project-based learning can help students experience diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives by illustrating how a science project can afford such opportunities when it is implemented as planned in the RTT-D reforms. The applicant also makes a strong case that a personalized sequence of instructional content and skills development can be achieved with a host of instruments including the NWEA MAP, select formative assessments, and the annual review of a career and college readiness plan.

However, the narrative sometimes tends to dwell on listing programs and instruments, such as project-based learning,

cooperative learning, and use of technology and is weak at providing specifics on the how and a series of concrete action plans to make the approach to be more credible and cohesive. For example, the applicant's approach is such that instructional coaches and professional development opportunities play a key role in improving teachers' instruction. However, there is limited information on the designing and implementing professional development as well as on how instructional coaches, counselors, the instructional technology specialists, teachers, and other relevant educators (respectively or as a team) contribute to the development of professional development. Additionally, the applicant's plan for accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students presents few details, so that although it is true that the applicant intends to address the needs of high-need students, but it is not clear what kinds of accommodations and supports are in place to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college and career-ready standards.

The applicant states that the Amphitheater parent portal can provide support to students in order to help track and manage their learning. However, there is limited evidence on whether the applicant can provide training and relevant support to students so that they do understand how to use the database tools and resources provided to them.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some evidence that its educators engage in professional teams/communities to support their capacity to achieve successful personalized learning environments. It provides a strong overview of its professional development need/methods addressing content and instruction including differentiated instruction. Additionally, it is clear that the Amphitheater Teacher/Administer Evaluation System actively uses feedback on effectiveness and facilitates professional growth. However, it is not clear whether and/or how the applicant's professional development opportunities address using data to inform both students and teachers.

The applicant demonstrates that it intends to afford its educators with access to tools and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career-ready graduation requirements. Using technology including the web-based curriculum is clearly supported; however, the applicant is unclear about the implementation of data-driven instruction and the use of actionable information to identify optimal individual learning approaches.

The applicant demonstrates evidence that it has a teacher evaluation system that helps school leaders and school leadership teams to improve teacher effectiveness, school culture/climate. In particular, the five domains of expectations (also in alignment with the Arizona Professional Teaching Standards) may serve as a strong basis for identifying and awarding effective teachers. It is also clear that (1) the teacher evaluation system has the teacher and evaluator to work together to address the strategies/recommendations for improvement, and that (2) the applicant has a strong system in place for continuous improvement towards the goal of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. The narrative provides strong details about the applicant's efforts to identify weakness in the teachers' instruction and using professional development and the system of support with continuous feedback to make improvements.

The applicant demonstrates that it has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective teachers in math/science and specialty areas. It is noticeable that the applicant has a stipend program for specific content areas and/or area of specialty for six years and a two year mentor program for every new teacher. However, the applicant is unclear about how it allows effective teachers/principals to work in hard-to-staff schools. The applicant does not provide any raw data on the outcomes of the stipend program or a current snapshot of the number of students receiving instruction from effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools, math/science, or special education.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides limited evidence that it has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. It is clear that the applicant has the central office to provide support and services to all participating schools. Also, the applicant provides school leadership teams with flexibility in providing learning resources and instructional practices. However, the narrative is unclear about the extent the school leadership's flexibility and autonomy is exercised including the control over school schedules and school personnel decisions and school-level budgets. Furthermore, although the applicant states that it can develop strategies (in consultation with the department of Special Education and the Language Acquisition and Cultural Development) to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery at multiple times and in multiple ways, the applicant provides little information on the development process; is unclear about the applicant's

commitment or the articulation of demonstrated mastery and the differentiated/unbiased student performance evaluation; does not address clearly on how to provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and accessible to all students.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence that its infrastructure supports a personalized learning environment in a variety of ways and ensures that all stakeholders will have access to support regardless of income. It is also clear that the applicant ensures all participants in the RTT-D reform have appropriate level of technical supports. The applicant also demonstrates a straightforward commitment that it plans to provide an information technology system that can facilitate data sharing as well as the use of interoperate data systems. However, the narrative is unclear about the applicant's current infrastructure capacity and therefore, how it actually adds more credence to the ambitious plan of providing strong infrastructure of technology and data systems remains uncertain.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates clear evidence that it intends to have a continuous improvement process for feedback on progress and making ongoing corrections. School site committee and district design team members will monitor and measure the progress. It is also noticeable that the applicant provides leveled involvements (i.e., site level, teacher level, and levels by other stakeholders) in monitoring the progress. It is noted that although the applicant is not clear about how it plans to publicly share information on the quality of its investments in this section, it provides appropriate information about it in section (E)(4).

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a comprehensive communication plan (e.g., parent portal, regular press releases, professional learning communities, etc.) while engaging both internal and external stakeholders.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents enough performance measures and ambitious yet achievable target goals with appropriate rationale for the measures and an explanation on how the measures align with the applicant's vision and goals in the RTT-D proposal. However, the applicant is unclear about how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence that it plans to evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D activities, such as professional development and technology. However, the plan (i.e., measurement methods) is not clear about how the applicant can allow such evaluation activities to lead to a more appropriate use of time, staff, and money to improve results through working with community partners, compensation reform, and modification of school schedules and structures.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides the budget tables that identify all funds for the project and provides cost descriptions. However, the budget narrative is lacking specifics on one-time investments and provides limited information to determine how the budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. For example, the unit numbers for laptop and/or desktop computers respectively are not provided in order to justify the total cost of purchasing computers. The budget narrative is also unclear about the applicant's strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that it has a plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant including funding opportunities through the ongoing of the Amphi Foundation matching funds and the district M & O funds. Although the applicant states that it has the community and partner support to continue the RTT-D reform efforts, the details about financial support from State and local government leaders are not documented; and there is limited information on a budget for the three years after the term of the grant including budget assumptions and uses of funds.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates evidence that it has meaningful partnership with the Amphi Foundation and the Family School Partnership Foundation, which can integrate education and services that address social-emotional and behavioral needs. However, the narrative provides few details about its population-level desired results for students in the district that align with and support the applicant's broader RTT-D proposal. Other missing information include how the partnership actually helps the applicant develop capacity to scale up the partnership model for more students with various needs including activities to assess (1) the needs and assets of students and (2) the applicant's progress in implementing its plan to maximize impact on the education and family and community supports. Furthermore, the narrative is unclear about the applicant's annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level as well as desired results for students.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

It is clear throughout the application that the applicant meets this priority. The applicant addresses the core educational assurance areas and intends to create student learning opportunities for personalized learning and meeting academic needs of all students for college and career-ready. Its proposal addresses the personalized learning environments, expanding student access to effective teaching practices, decreasing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation rates.

Total	210	144

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0889AZ-4 for Amphitheater Unified School District, #10

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has created the Amphitheater Custom Education, or ACE model. It reflects the core educational assistance areas, as it addresses a teacher and administrator evaluation system, personalized learning with reliance on technology in blended classrooms, professional development for teacher effectiveness, and has an emphasis on college and career readiness. It relies on a student data system that provides information to teachers, as well as has the ability for computer adaptive assessments that further personalize learning.

The vision provided is clear with its emphasis on blended learning that will allow students to pursue academic interests in order to deepen their learning. The plan includes methods to accelerate student learning, via frequent monitoring of student performance and the use of blended learning.

The applicant does not provide evidence of increasing equity, which is one of the components of this criterion.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate. Based on identified needs, the LEA has decided to focus on mathematics and science in grades 3-12, thus students in these grades and schools that serve them were selected. Of the 14,438 students in the district, 5851 will be impacted by the grant, all of whom are high need and low income students. More than eighty percent of the LEA's 6969 low income students will participate. The total number of participating educators is 728.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of its logic model in the application, describing four phases of implementation of blended learning, so that phase four ends with the full implementation in all LEA schools and with all teachers trained in the model.

The LEA provides a compelling rationale to phase in reforms, including evaluation of the plan, improvements to the teacher evaluation system, and upgrades to the student database so that reform will be sustainable throughout the district.

The high quality plan includes activities, timelines, responsible parties, and deliverables for each phase. The timelines are reasonable, and the activities are appropriate for each phase of the plan.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence with ambitious and achievable goals for improved outcomes for grades three to ten on math and science assessments, for the all students category and by subgroups. Achievement gaps data is provided for mathematics and science, with goals increasing annually so that in five years the gap is reduced by more than fifty percent.

While the methodology section indicates that the objective is to have 1.5 years of growth per year, no evidence is given for the state's targets on these achievement exams.

The applicant provides district level data and goals for high school graduation, which reaches 90.6% by the end of the grant and increases after the life of the grant. No evidence is given for campus level graduation rates by subgroup.

No evidence is provided for college enrollment, but a table is provided of student self-reported data in section A4. No evidence is given for campus level college enrollment or by subgroup.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides narrative evidence that the district has some success over the last four years. It has worked on improving low achieving schools, established a teacher incentive fund and a value added evaluation system, and internally evaluated district improvements. The evaluation report results show that survey respondents thought that student achievement has improved. However, no assessment results were given to bolster this view.

Teacher turnover was reduced by more than fifty percent in this period. In this context, a reduction of turnover indicates that teacher quality has increased and that quality, experienced teachers tend to stay in the district.

Teachers are provided a data book which contains static historic data of student assessment. Parents can access student data via the district's parent portal.

No evidence of closing gaps, increasing college enrollment, or improving data reporting to students in the last four years was presented.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence that it posts average teacher salary information on its website. Overall budget information is available through the Amphi Facts page, the Chief Financial Officer, the Finance Office and each principal.

No evidence is given that the LEA makes salary data available by the categories of instructional and support staff, instructional staff, teachers only, and non-personnel expenditures.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence that there are successful conditions for its project of blended learning, which has already been approved at the state level. Its college and career readiness plan is compatible with the state's Race to the Top initiatives, including the evaluation system, longitudinal database, and use of the state's curriculum modules.

No evidence is provided that the LEA has autonomy to implement the proposed activities.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant gives evidence that it has involved teachers, parents and community members in the current proposal through a multi-step process, including a brain-storming session, division into work groups, and the creation of a comprehensive design team, drawn from all constituents. Approval for the proposal is evident based on letters of support for the project, including from the union president, LEA personnel, a local foundation, and the mayor.

The LEA does not provide evidence that students were engaged in the proposal. No letters of support are included from student or parent organizations.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence that it has analyzed needs and gaps using multiple meetings of parents, teachers, and community members to review data on a wide variety of measures, including Stanford 10, Sat, and AP results. It has identified the need for interventions in mathematics for low income students. However, no timelines were provided in the needs analysis section.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of the ownership of student learning through goal-setting, progress charting, and other methods. Blended learning and technology allow for constant feedback so that students can self-monitor their progress. Blended learning also allows students to deepen their learning experiences, and will incorporate cooperative and project-based learning so that students can learn collaboration skills . Technology will be used to connect students to other places and cultures.

Counselors will engage both students and parents to develop and review future plans. A personalized sequence of content will be developed and implemented with the use of NWEA MAP software, which provides ongoing formative assessment. Teachers, parents and students will review progress towards college and career readiness on an annual basis.

Teachers will be provided professional development related to personalized learning and technology in order to develop high quality instructional approaches. In addition, Instructional coaches will be funded through grant money to help all teachers receive feedback on effectiveness.

The applicant provides evidence that it has contemplated accommodations for high needs students, including the use of assistive technology, but it does not address college and career readiness for high needs students.

The applicant does not provide evidence that mechanisms or processes are in place to help students learn to use tools to manage their own learning.

The LEA does not include all elements of a high quality plan. It does indicate some deliverables (individualized plan) and responsible parties (teachers, counselors, instructional coaches), but it does not have clear timelines to identify how key components of the blended learning project will be developed and implemented, nor targets to indicate progress towards the personalization process.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has created a high quality plan related to improving teaching with a comprehensive professional development plan. Teachers will have access to student achievement data so that feedback can be given regularly on college and career readiness. However, the proposal does not detail how this data will inform instruction.

 The applicant provides evidence for all elements of a high quality professional development plan. The proposal includes professional development needs (such as delivery of blended learning and differentiated instruction) necessary for personalization, but also principal and teacher evaluation system details, including the frequency of classroom observations and specific domains to monitor and improve. Instructional coaches as well as experts will support teachers in applying professional development best practices in the classroom.

The applicant will offer stipends as an incentive to teachers to attract teachers to hard-to-staff positions. The lessons learned from the TIF grant have allowed the applicant to successfully staff schools so that all students have highly qualified teachers. However, a demonstration of improvement, such as specific numbers of students served by highly qualified principals and teachers over the last four years, is not provided.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided evidence that is has provided central office to better support the ACE project in participating schools, including the additional staff in the technology department and restructuring the role of instructional coaches and the Department of Special Education and Language Acquisition.

School leadership will have flexibility in providing learning resources and selecting instructional practices. However, no evidence is provided that school teams have flexibility and autonomy in the areas of personnel, scheduling or budgets.

The applicant has presented evidence that students have several methods of demonstrating mastery, including credit recovery and online learning programs. It is not clear if all students have access to all methods of demonstrating mastery.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides evidence that its supports teachers and educators in the use of data systems through its technology department and instructional coaches. On-line help is also available to them.

No evidence is given that the LEA ensures that all students have access to content and tools both in and out of school. There are no timelines, targets, or responsible parties as part of a plan to ensure that students of low income have access to learning resources out of school.

The LEA provides stakeholders with technological support using the technology department as well as departments that are responsible for each data program.

Evidence is provided that the LEA supports an open data format as well as interoperable systems of budget, human resources, and instructional improvement. An open format will allow students and parents to use personalized data in other online venues. The district will benefit from interoperable systems, as staff will see relationships between budgets, scheduling, staffing, and student achievement.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has created a limited plan for continuous improvement, including timelines and responsible parties, such as monthly meetings with the project director and data analyst, and quarterly meetings with the principal and site team. Teachers and instructional coaches will monitor individual student progress.

The plan does not include the input of parents and community members. It is missing deliverables in the form of reports and a mechanism for decision-making and taking action to remediate problems.

The applicant has presented evidence that it will communicate with internal and external stakeholders via regular press releases, electronic newsletters, as well as a frequently updated website.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented evidence that it has ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders via regular press releases, electronic newsletters, as well as a frequently updated website. Principals and teachers can provide feedback at many opportunities.

The applicant does not provide a specific forum or method for the public to address the continuous improvement of the interventions in the proposal, nor a single district responsible party to coordinate feedback.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has performance measures in math and science, with baselines and targets for grades 4-8, and 11-12.

The FAFSA completion rates for grades 11 and 12 have targets; however, it is unclear how these goals were established without baseline data.

No rationale was given for the measurement for college preparation. College and career readiness were only monitored with 11th and 12th grade mathematics targets.

No methodology is given for the measurement of social activity participation in grades 4-12.

Baseline and targets for having highly effective teachers and principals were included in the proposal.

Additional measures were added to the proposal, such as parental college activity, blended learning, and participation in the ACT. These optional measures have a complete rationale and measurement description.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence that it will evaluate three initiatives: professional development, curriculum, and technology. The measurement methods for each are listed in a table in section E4. Reporting mechanisms will be school newsletters and formal reports.

The LEA does not provide evidence for timelines, specific deliverables, or responsible parties for this evaluation plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that about twenty percent of all funds for the project will come from the local LEA. These funds will target some teacher salaries, tutoring, on-line curriculum, and some computers. Race to the Top funds will cover instructional technology specialists, instructional coaches, college and career counselors, 2975 computers, wireless installation, and additional curriculum.

No distinction is made between one-time investments and ongoing operational costs.

There is a two hundred dollar variation in computer pricing between laptops and desktops, which could result in three hundred fewer computers purchased, and three hundred fewer students served. No discussion of the decision-making process related to this or a contingency plan is given.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has considered sustainability beyond the life of the grant, and will seek additional grant funds through the federal government or the Amphi foundation.

No evidence is given for timelines, goals or activities related to the sustainability of the project. No letters of support relate to funding past the life of the grant. No distinction is made between one-time investments and ongoing operational costs, in which Race to the Top funds supply $4 million in personnel costs. It will be necessary to replace funds for personnel costs in order to sustain the project beyond the grant period.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a description of an on-going partnership with the Amphi Foundation, in which it has provided technology to classrooms.

The proposal contains a letter of support from the foundation, but it does not specify financial assistance.

Specific donations by the foundation related to college and career readiness are not provided in the proposal, nor are goals. targets, timelines, deliverables, responsible parties. A donation of clothing to assist low income students is mentioned.

No population level results are listed for this priority. Also missing are descriptions of the partnership's methods of tracking the selected indicators, using data to target resources, a strategy to scale the model and improve the results over time. The applicant fails to address how the partnership would increase staff capacity.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence that it meets the core educational assurance areas, including a teacher and principal evaluation system and that it is in a State that has adopted college and career ready standards. The project will focus on blended learning to create personalized learning environments that are aligned with the Common Core standards (college- and career-ready standards).

Its use of data will accelerate student achievement by monitoring each student's academic needs, as well as pay attention to achievement gaps across student groups. This increased use of personalization through blended learning will deepen learning and will raise the rates at which students graduate from high school.

The applicant addresses the effectiveness of educators by providing for extensive professional development in the use of technology.

Overall, the application addresses the criteria of Absolute Priority 1, and so meets the criteria.

Total	210	133